Targum Jonathan on Jonah
תרגום יונתן על יונה
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Targum Jonathan on Jonah

Chapter 1

And this was the word of prophecy from before the LORD with Jonah son of Amitai, saying:
Get up, go down to Nineveh, the great city, and prophecy upon them, for their evil has risen before Me.
And Jonah got up to flee to the sea, from before prophesying in the name of the LORD, and went down to Joppa and found a ship that was leaving to the sea, and he gave the toll and went down in it to go with them on the sea from before prophesying in the name of the LORD.
And the LORD rose up a great wind on the sea, and there was a great cyclone in the sea, and the boat would be breaking up.
And the sailors were afraid, and each man pleaded from object of reverence, and they saw that there was no benefit to it, and they threw the weights that were on the ship into the sea to lighten it, and Jonah had gone down to the bottom of the corner of the ship and lay down and slept.
And the captain of the sailors got to him and said to him, “What, are you sleeping? Get up, pray before your God! Perhaps there will be mercy from before your God on us, and we will not be lost!”
And they said, one man to another, “Come on, let’s cast lots, and we’ll know on whose account this evil is ours.” And they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.
And they said to him, “Tell us, now, you on whose account this evil is ours. What is your labor? And where do you come from? Which is your country, and of which people are you?”
And he said to them, “A Jew am I, and before the LORD God of Heaven, who made the sea and the land, I revere.”
And the men were afraid with a great fear, and said to him, “What did you do!?” because the men know that from before the LORD he had fled, since he told them.
And they said to him, “What should we do to you to calm the sea from us!” For the sea was going and its cyclone was strengthening.
And he said to them, “Hoist me and throw me into the sea, and the sea will calm from upon you. For I know that it is on my account that this great cyclone is upon you.
And the men sailed about to come to dry land, but they could not, because the sea was going and its cyclone was strengthening upon them.
And they prayed before the LORD and said: “Receive our pleas, LORD! Let us not now be lost for the guilt of the soul of this man, and do not put upon us the guilt of righteous blood! For You are the LORD; what is desired before You, You do!”
And they lifted up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea calmed from its cyclone.
And the men revered with great reverence before the LORD, and they said they would sacrifice sacrifices before the LORD and pledge pledges.

Chapter 2

And the LORD invited a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the fish’s guts for three days and three nights.
And Jonah prayed before the LORD his God from the fish’s guts.
And he said: I prayed, since in narrow straits was I, before the LORD, and He received my prayer from the lowest depths; I pleaded, You acted on my plea.
And You threw me in the depths of the heart of the sea, and the river all around me, all the sea’s cyclones and waves passed over me.
And I had said: “I am driven out from before Your Word; will I again gaze upon the palace of Your Holiness?”
Water encircled me to death; depths surrounded me; the reedy sea rose over my head.
To the roots of mountains You brought me down; earth drawing against me in strength to over all existence, and You — near before You to come up from the damage alive, LORD my God.
In weariness my soul is upon me; of worshipping the LORD I am reminded, and entering before You is my prayer to the palace of Your Holiness.
Not like the nations worshipping falsehoods; of the place of goodness none of them know.
And I, in laudation, give thanks; my offerings I will offer before You as I pledged; I will repay my soul’s redemption in the shadow of before the LORD!
And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it discharged Jonah onto dry land.

Chapter 3

And this was the word of prophecy from before the LORD with Jonah again, saying:
Get up, go down to Nineveh, the great city, and prophecy upon them the prophecy that I command you.
And Jonah got up and went to Nineveh per the word of the LORD, and Nineveh was a big city before the LORD — a three-days’ walk across.
And Jonah began to enter the city, a one-day’s walk in, and he announced and said: “At the end of forty days Nineveh will be overturned!”
And the people of Nineveh believed the word of the LORD, and they decreed a fast and bound with sackcloth, from the greatest to the smallest.
And the word reached before the king of Nineveh, 1 Some texts say: “before the Pharaoh who was king in those days in Nineveh,” and he got up from his royal throne and removed his valuable clothes and from him and covered himself in sackcloth and sat on ashes.
And he called out and said in Nineveh from the decree of the king and his officials, saying: “People and animals, cattle and sheep, none shall taste anything, nor graze, nor drink water.”
And people and animals were covered in sackcloth and prayed before the LORD vigorously, and each man turned from his wicked way and from the robbery of his hands.
“Who knows, He has our guilt in His hand! He may turn from us and have mercy on it from before the LORD, and turn back from His strong anger that we may not be lost.”
And their acts were revealed before God, that they had turned from their evil ways, and God turned the evil that He had said he would do away from them and did not do it.

Chapter 4

And this displeased Jonah as greatly evil, and he raised an objection.
And he prayed before the LORD and said: “Accept my plea, LORD! Isn’t this what I said would happen upon my land? This is why I hurried to flee to the sea, since I know that You, God, are merciful and compassionate, slow

to anger and abounding in doing good, and You turn Your word back from bringing about evil.
And now, LORD, take — now! — my life from me, because better I die than live.”
And the LORD said, “You mad?”
And Jonah went out from the city and sat east of the city and built a hut there and sat under it in shadow until he could see what the doom of the city would be.
And the LORD God invited a gourd, and it grew up over Jonah to be shade over his head, to shelter him from its evil, and Jonah rejoiced with much rejoicing over the gourd.
And the LORD invited a worm as the sun rose on the net day, and it struck the gourd and it wilted.
And when the sun was in the east, the LORD invited a silent east wind, and the sun spread out over Jonah’s head, and he was weakened and asked for his life to die, saying “Better I die than live.”
And the LORD said to Jonah, “You mad about that gourd?” And he said, “Yes, I’m so mad I want to die!”
And the LORD said, “You! You had mercy on the gourd which you didn’t work for and you didn’t grow, one night it was there and the next it was gone.
And I, should I not have mercy on Nineveh, the great city that had in it more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who don’t know the difference between their right and left, and many animals too?